



# **SECURING ELECTORAL PROCESSES:**

## **The Role of the Police and Peacekeeping Forces, Lessons Learnt from ECOWAS**



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# Outline of the Presentation



- Why should Security Agencies be involved in the Electoral Process?
- Preparing Security Agencies for their Role in the Electoral Process
- Examples of Roles Played by Security Agencies During Elections in ECOWAS Member States
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- Key Lessons for Effective Policing of the Electoral Process

# Why should Security Agencies be involved in the Electoral Process?



- It is generally agreed that credible elections are those that are a genuine expression of the will of the people **FREELY EXPRESSED** through periodic public consultation.
- This view arises from the obligations that nations have subscribed to under various International Treaties and Conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); the African Charter on Human and People's rights; the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007), the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), etc.
- For example, Art. 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person ...."
- However, in order for people to enjoy this right, States must put the necessary measures in place, including providing security.



- In West Africa, Art. 19(2) of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance provides that: “The Police and other security agencies shall be responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of persons and their properties”, thus assigning the responsibility of maintaining the individual right to freedom to the security agencies.
- Therefore, because elections are an integral part of the ordinary course of national life, it can be expected that the security agencies would take steps to give effect to citizens’ right to liberty and safety throughout the electoral process.

# Preparing Security Agencies for their role in the Electoral Process



- In defining the role security agencies have to play in a democracy, Art. 23(1) of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance provides that: “The armed forces, the police and other security agencies shall during their training receive instruction on the Constitution, .... human rights, humanitarian law, and democratic principles”
- Furthermore, Art. 23(2) provides that: “Joint training sessions shall also be arranged for members of security agencies from different ECOWAS countries”
- It is in keeping with the above provisions, that various Training Centers of Excellence (TCE) working with the ECOWAS Commission, organize trainings for Mid- to Senior-level Police and Military officers from across the region to sensitize them on their roles and responsibilities during elections.

# Examples of Roles Played by Security Agencies During Elections in ECOWAS Member States



- Although the roles played by different security agencies during elections may vary slightly from one ECOWAS Member State to another, they generally perform the following functions at different stages in the electoral process:
  - a. Deploy static and/or mobile patrol units around Voter Registration Centres and Polling Centres;
  - b. Deploy static units to protect EMB warehouses and premises (including Results Collation Centres);
  - c. Deploy mobile units to accompany the movement of electoral materials (voter registration kits, ballot papers, results sheets, etc.);
  - d. Provide Security Detail for candidates in Presidential elections;
  - e. Deploy static and/or patrol units at the venues of election campaigns.



## The Togolese Experience: Force Sécurité Elections (FOSE)

- It would be recalled that the 2005 Presidential elections in Togo were marred by brutal attacks on voters by security agents.
- The effect of that violence was an unwillingness of citizens to go out and vote during the following election.
- In response to this situation, and in a bid to allay the fears of voters, a Special Election Security Force named FOSE was created.
- FOSE consists of a group of specially-trained personnel drawn from the Police, Gendarmerie, and other security agencies, that have undergone election-specific training.
- The FOSE is under the joint control of the Ministry of Security and the Electoral Commission.
- The FOSE is constituted in the lead up to an election and disbanded after the completion of the electoral process.



## Key Lessons for Effective Policing of the Electoral Process

- 1) Human Rights training for staff of security agencies is important.
- 2) It is useful to develop clear Operational Guidelines, detailing the “Dos and Don’ts” of election duty, for security agents.
- 3) Ideally, security agents on election duty should not carry arms. However, if they must, such arms should be properly concealed to avoid sending the wrong signal to voters.
- 4) Operational cooperation between the Electoral Management Body and security agencies goes a long way to ensure effective policing of the electoral process.





THANK YOU!!!